

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 855

IR 055 334

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TITLE ADA Compliance: What Are We Doing?
PUB DATE Jul 94
NOTE 36p.; Master's Research Paper, Kent State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accessibility (for Disabled); *Access to Information; *Assistive Devices (for Disabled); *Compliance (Legal); Library Facilities; Library Funding; Library Planning; *Library Services; *Public Libraries; Surveys; User Needs (Information)
IDENTIFIERS *Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; Ohio

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies, policies, and practices of Ohio public libraries in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Small to medium public libraries were surveyed to gather information about the ways libraries are providing equal access to materials and services for patrons with disabilities. One hundred and four libraries responded to questions about their planning for compliance; physical access to the building; alternative materials and services such as audiotapes and large print books; attempts to solicit patron input concerning ADA compliance; funding for adaptive equipment; and creative solutions for providing equal access such as delivery and retrieving materials for patrons, installation of bells, additional lighting, and computer terminals with larger screens. The results of the survey indicate that libraries are trying to provide quality services to their public. The strongest areas of compliance are with physical access to the building and provision of materials in alternative formats. Areas of concern include the fact that 40% of libraries have not performed the mandated self-evaluation of ADA compliance, some libraries' perception that they have no disabled people in their communities and their anger at being mandated to comply with the law. The appendix contains the questionnaire and cover letter. (Contains 8 references.) (DGM)

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ADA COMPLIANCE: WHAT ARE WE DOING?

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Albert Scheimann

July, 1994

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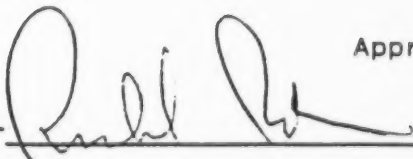
Master's Research Paper by

Albert Scheimann

B.A., Kent State University, 1992

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1994

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Approved by
Adviser  Date 7-10-94

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Abstract

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is thought by many to be the most important civil rights legislation of the past two decades. This study attempts to identify strategies, policies and practices of public libraries in the state of Ohio to comply with the letter and spirit of this act. By means of a survey of the medium to small size public libraries in the state, information has been gathered to show what means and methods, both standard and innovative, are actually being used by these libraries to provide equal access to materials and services for patrons with disabilities.

The results suggest that although work is being done to serve patrons, planning, funding, library perception of the community, and perhaps attitudinal barriers may be creating problems.

The findings of this study have been offered to interested participants in the hope of enhancing public library services throughout the state.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries in the United States are currently obligated to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA) of 1990, Public Law 101-336. The purpose of this study was to gather, by means of a voluntary survey, data from public libraries concerning their current planning for, evaluation and provision of services to patrons with disabilities. The gathered data were then analyzed in order to identify common trends as well as unique solutions concerning the problem of compliance. The results of this study have been offered to interested survey participants for comparison with their practices as well as to allow them to discover practices of other libraries that they may wish to implement.

The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990 and was designed to end discrimination against persons with disabilities and bring them into the economic and social mainstream of American life. The law applies to all publicly funded entities and libraries are specifically mentioned. The ADA requires that by January 26, 1992, public entities shall have designated a person to coordinate compliance activities and that by January 26, 1993 they

shall have completed a self-evaluation of current policies, practices and services in order to make necessary modifications. If complaints are filed against an entity for not being accessible, these are to be treated as civil rights issues. The public library tradition of equal access to materials and services is surely grounds for expecting that these libraries agree with the spirit and intent of the ADA and are attempting to achieve compliance.

One major stumbling block to this compliance may be the cost. Although ADA does not require that a public entity take actions that would cause undue financial burdens, it is the responsibility of the entity to prove the problems created to be unmanageable. The law states that barriers to accessibility must be removed if "readily achievable." The United States Department of Justice defines this as "easily accomplished without much difficulty or expense." However, if the initial means are not deemed "readily achievable" then, it is the library's responsibility to make its services and materials available through alternative methods.

It has been the objective of this study to identify what evaluation and planning procedures Ohio public libraries are using for the provision of services and materials to patrons with disabilities. It was also intended to help to identify what accommodations have been put in place to serve those patrons' information needs. It

is expected that this report of these strategies and methods will provide participating libraries with a benchmark against which to compare their own practices as well as a collection of alternative methods they may wish to implement toward ADA compliance.

Since most of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act have only recently become effective, this study is designed to be a preliminary one and descriptive in nature. Due to the limited population that this project has surveyed, any suggestions of methods of ADA compliance have certainly not exhausted the possibilities. Although ADA defines disability as

...with respect to an individual a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment(s
12102)

for the purposes of this study, 'persons with disabilities' has been limited to include only those with mobility impairments, hearing impairments, or visual impairments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The need for compliance with ADA by public libraries has been well represented in the literature. A fine overview of the law by Lewis and its ramifications for public libraries has been written (Lewis 1992). The author outlines the four titles contained in ADA and how they impact the areas of employment, public services and entities, public transportation, and telecommunications. His article examines the requirements of physical access to facilities as well as the demands placed on libraries to provide access to services either by means of assistive devices or through aides. Lewis strongly emphasizes the need for librarians to be leaders in providing equal access to persons with disabilities.

There has been work done showing the practical and legal need for libraries to institute a planning process for ADA compliance (Pack and Foos 1992). Full compliance with the law demands elimination of all discrimination against persons with disabilities in all aspects of an entity's operation. This, they argue, can best be done by becoming familiar with the text of the law itself, appointing a library employee as ADA coordinator for the library,

evaluating current practices and policies, implementing changes needed to allow persons with disabilities to access all library programs and services, providing training for all library staff and related personnel, and soliciting feedback from library users with disabilities. Their article includes a descriptive list of sources to aid libraries in this undertaking.

Several works have offered definitions and specific answers and suggestions for the planning process and the elimination of architectural and other barriers (Natale 1991, Gunde 1991, Gunde 1992). Natale provides an extensive list of modifications that are considered to be readily achievable such as installing ramps and repositioning telephones. Gunde addresses not only specifics such as what accommodations might be considered adequate for serving a patron who is blind, but the need for being proactive rather than reactive in these provisions.

One of the first steps required by ADA of publicly supported libraries was to have developed and completed a self-evaluation by January 26, 1993. Although the rules for ADA specify this procedure, the Federal government did not design a self-evaluation form. Natale has prepared and presented a model self-evaluation that can be used "as is" or modified to fit a library's specific needs in evaluating the accessibility of their services (Natale 1992).

In this same article Natale (1992) reports on the only

surveys of library accessibility this researcher has found. In 1985 and again in 1990, the University of Illinois Library Research Center analyzed data from public libraries in the state of Illinois to determine their accessibility. The information collected dealt largely with architectural accessibility and supported the hypothesis that at least half of the public library facilities in the state of Illinois were not fully accessible to the disabled. This researcher found no reports of practices in current use by libraries to accommodate access to materials and services by patrons with hearing or visual impairments.

CHAPTER 3

Method

This study surveyed medium to small size public libraries in the state of Ohio in order to determine what measures are being taken to evaluate and plan for provision of services and materials to patrons with disabilities as well as to determine what accommodations are currently in place to serve those patrons information needs. This researcher finds two strong reasons for having limited the survey to these smaller institutions: the large and very large libraries in the state may have strategies and solutions that are not readily applicable to the smaller libraries, and the smaller libraries, with the ability to know a larger percentage of their patrons, may have a unique, personal understanding of the needs of members of their community. It was expected that this information would not only allow the participants to evaluate their policies and procedures relative to those of their colleagues, but to also act as an aid to creative solutions to the problem of equal access to library facilities and services.

The directors of the 183 public libraries with an FTE staff of twenty-five or less as reported in Statistics of

Ohio Libraries 1993 (State Library of Ohio 1993) were invited to participate. Branches of these facilities were not contacted for two reasons. First, this would have increased the size of the population to a rather unmanageable dimension and second, the possible overlap of responses between connected main and branch facilities might have led to duplication in responses.

The instrument that was used in this survey is a questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended questions, three semi-open-ended questions and one completely open-ended opportunity to expand upon any of the questions or to describe alternative methods of providing accessibility to patrons with disabilities (see appendix A). The instrument was developed, in part, using Natale's ADA self-evaluation (Natale 1992) as a model along with suggestions derived from the sources mentioned above in the literature review as well as conversations with interested consumers and professionals. The closed-ended questions are grouped in five areas and may all be answered yes, no, or not applicable, while the three semi-open-ended questions attempt to elicit descriptions of creative or innovative methods of compliance.

The first three questions deal with specific ADA planning objectives. Questions four through eleven address accommodations for patrons with mobility impairments. Questions twelve through sixteen are concerned with visual

impairments. Seventeen through nineteen deal with accommodations for those with hearing impairments while question twenty is concerned with overall planning.

This instrument was sent to those invited to participate along with a cover letter explaining the project (see appendix B). After two weeks, those not responding were sent a follow-up letter along with an additional copy of the instrument.

Collected data were summarized and analyzed and implications of the results have been discussed. This researcher feels that some of the most valuable and interesting information has been derived from the semi-open questions and the open-ended opportunity for participants to describe what their library has done to provide equal access to services and materials for patrons with disabilities.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The instrument was sent to the 183 libraries identified above. After two weeks, 94 completed questionnaires had been returned. At this time, follow up letters and an additional copy of the questionnaire were sent to the non-respondents. This resulted in ten additional responses for a total of 104 or a 57 percent total response. The responding libraries ranged in size from 24.4 to .57 FTE's with a mean of 9.4 employees and a median size of 8.8.

Although the questionnaires contained no identifiers so as to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, the return envelopes were coded in order to determine who had responded and facilitate the distribution of follow-up letters. This allowed for the ordering of the responses according to the relative size of the library before the instruments were removed from their envelopes. This was done in order to identify any trends in responses in relationship to the size of the responding library.

Planning for Compliance

The four questions concerned with planning for ADA compliance produced some rather surprising results (see

Table 1).

TABLE 1
PLANNING FOR COMPLIANCE

	Y #/%	N #/%	N/A #/%
Named ADA Coordinator	38/37%	66/63%	
Self-evaluation Completed	65/63%	39/37%	
Awareness and Training Prog.	16/16%	88/84%	
Board reviewed Policies	61/59%	43/41%	

Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their library had performed a self-evaluation for ADA compliance and 36 percent had appointed a staff member as ADA coordinator. Only six of the libraries (16%) who had named a coordinator had not yet completed a self-evaluation. Sixteen libraries (16%) indicated they had a disability awareness and training program for their staff in place and all of these libraries were in the top half of the respondents in terms of the relative size of the library. Fifty-nine percent of the libraries reported that the library board had reviewed the procedures and policies intended to ensure equal access to services and materials by persons with disabilities.

Physical Access

The largest number of positive responses came in answer to the questions concerning physical access to the building itself (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
PHYSICAL ACCESS

	Y #/%	N #/%	N/A #/%
Accessible Parking	90/87%	13/12%	1/ 1%
Accessible Walkway	100/96%	4/ 4%	
Entrance at least 32 in.	99/95%	5/ 5%	
Doors easily opened	77/74%	27/26%	
Appropriate aisle width	74/71%	30/29%	
Appropriate desk and counter height	38/37%	66/63%	
Ramps/Elevators	49/47%	21/20%	34/33%
Braille/Raised letter elevator controls	28/27%	31/30%	45/43%
Braille/Raised letter signage	27/26%	77/74%	

Nearly 87 percent reported availability of parking spaces large enough to accommodate a van equipped with a wheelchair

lift (one respondent answered 'not applicable' as the library had no parking that they controlled). Over 95 percent indicated that the walkway into the building was at least 36 inches wide and in good repair and that the entrance door was at least 32 inches wide. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed answered that the entrance door could be easily opened with one hand (six libraries had automatic door openers).

Once the patron had made their way into the building however, accommodations were not as common. While 71 percent of responding libraries had aisles that were all at least 36 inches wide, less than 50 percent had catalogs, displays, reference materials, and service counters at appropriate heights. Of the seventy libraries (67%) that had more than one public level, forty-nine (70%) had them connected by ramps or elevators and only fifty percent of those with elevators indicated that the elevator controls included Braille or raised lettering at appropriate heights.

Nine of those surveyed (9%) reported that they had made inexpensive physical modifications to their facilities. The most common modification was to lengthen the legs on reading and computer tables in order to accommodate wheelchairs. One library had removed the skirting from several existing tables in order to provide required knee and foot room. There was one report of cutting the legs off of a standing-height card catalog in order to make it accessible to

patrons using wheelchairs.

Alternate Materials and Services

Approximately ninety percent of the respondents reported that audio taped and large print materials were available for persons with visual impairments but, only twenty-two libraries (21%) included any materials in Braille in their collections (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
ALTERNATE MATERIALS/SERVICES

	Y #/%	N #/%	N/A #/%
Audio tapes	92/88%	12/12%	
Large print	99/95%	5/ 5%	
Braille	22/21%	82/79%	
Reading machine	13/13%	91/87%	
Staff will read documents	82/79%	22/21%	
TDD	18/17%	86/83%	
Closed caption video	58/56%	46/44%	
ASL literate staff	20/19%	84/81%	

Twenty-six percent of those surveyed stated that directional signs in their facilities were well lit and included Braille and raised lettering. Although only 13

percent of the libraries had some sort of adaptive reading machines available for the use of persons with visual impairments, 79 percent said that staff members were available to read documents for those who might need assistance.

Concerning accommodations for persons with hearing impairments, the libraries reported as follows. Fifty-eight libraries (56%) had closed caption video tapes available and thirteen of these (13%) had made this a searchable item in their OPACs. Twenty libraries (19%) had at least one staff member who could speak American Sign Language, although all but two of these commented that these individuals were only minimally fluent. Eighteen libraries (17%) had telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDDs) and fifty-two percent of the remainder mentioned that with the availability of Ameritech's statewide Ohio Relay Service, library based TDDs were no longer felt to be necessary.

Patron Input

An open-ended question inquired as to the library's attempts to solicit patron input concerning ADA compliance. Seven libraries (7%) responded that they had, in fact, done this. Four libraries (4%) indicated that they had formally included one or more patrons with physical limitations on their ADA evaluation committee. Another library had invited members of the local "Handicapped Society" to tour the building and to make suggestions. This same respondent

reported that the library was able to implement many of their suggestions. The remaining two libraries (2%) had distributed evaluation forms to several patrons with various physical impairments. One of these respondents reported that none of the evaluations were returned although some verbal comments were received. These comments seemed to indicate that patrons realized that many physical space limitations could not be easily solved and that they preferred additional materials and services to wider aisles and signage.

Funding

Ten libraries (10%) responded that they had solicited donations of adaptive equipment or funds to purchase such equipment and all of those so responding stated that donations were readily forthcoming. Local and national foundations, fraternal organizations and social clubs, as well as local societies for the blind were named as sources of donations. One respondent wrote that this seemed to be a good idea and that her or his library would try to implement it as soon as possible.

Creative Solutions

Thirty-one of the responding libraries (30%) took advantage of the opportunity to expand upon or describe alternative measures their libraries were taking to help

provide equal access to information for persons with disabilities. Several respondents also used this opportunity to comment on the Americans with Disabilities Act and public library responsibility to accommodate patrons' needs.

Eleven respondents (11%) commented that after evaluating their facilities it had been determined that a new facility or a remodeling and renovation of the existing one would be required to comply with ADA and that they had either recently rebuilt, were in the process of doing so, or were in the planning phase. All but one of these respondents indicated that an architect familiar with ADA regulations had been consulted. One reporter indicated that their library had had their building project partially funded through a LSCA Title II grant designed specifically to help meet ADA guidelines.

A popular strategy was home delivery of library materials. Twenty five libraries (24%) reported either a formal or informal practice of taking requests for materials by phone and then arranging for those materials to be delivered to the patron. This notion of informal arrangements for accommodating patrons' needs occurred in other comments as well.

A number of the respondents reported that the library staff was available and willing to retrieve materials for patrons not able to do so on their own. Others felt that

standard inter-library loans would allow them to obtain specialized materials for their patrons with special needs and that automation projects would allow for access to their collections by persons who might otherwise not be able to use the catalog. Five respondents (5%) expressed the thought that libraries, with their service orientation, should find no particular difficulty serving the needs of a patron regardless of their limitations; phrases such as "equal standard of quality", "simple kindness and consideration", and "provision of necessary services no matter their limitations" characterized these responses.

Other individual responses included the following. One library has installed a sign and a bell at the door informing any one who needs assistance to please ring and staff will respond. A lift has been installed in a bookmobile and staff trained to operate it at one location. Two libraries reported particular attempts to accommodate patrons with hearing impairments, one by making sign interpreters available for workshops, and another has acquired "hearing assistance mechanisms" for persons in the audience in their meeting room programs. Other attempts at accommodation included adjusting closures on doors so that they close more slowly, installation of additional lighting, computer terminals with larger than normal screens and characters, and inviting patrons with disabilities to address the board concerning library accessibility.

Some responses concerning ADA and library compliance were, however, less positive. One respondent wrote "Libraries as a whole have always tried to include disabled people, however I have a \$50,000 elevator that is used by less than six people! People must soon learn that a lot of things in life aren't fair. There just are not enough resources to provide every individual and every group with everything he, she, or it desires. It seems to me, library staff does more and more to serve laws and less and less to serve people." Another stated "I truly believe that libraries and other public buildings should be accessible to all people. However, I also believe it is unrealistic to issue unfunded mandates given the fiscal restraints facing state funded institutions nationwide." Along this same vein a third wrote "We simply can't afford it so we are ignoring it."

Lastly, some other responses questioned the need for library services for those with disabilities. One respondent stated "We have one child in a wheel chair in town. He has no trouble getting around here. We've not had a need for adaptive equipment." Another wrote "No one has ever been into the library that could not see and also no one in a wheelchair. We have had no problems." Finally, one response said "In the eleven years I've been director of this library no one has ever come in in a wheelchair and I doubt that they ever will." The individuals making these

last three statements were from libraries spanning nearly the entire size range of those surveyed; none of these three reported having performed a self-evaluation for ADA compliance nor had they named an ADA coordinator.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this survey seem to indicate that the libraries responding are, in general, trying to provide quality services to their public. Many responses point out that this is due to the fact that is what libraries do and it is not merely an attempt to comply with federal law.

With ten participants reporting soliciting donations, eleven reporting plans for renovation and remodeling, and other individual mentions of financial concerns, the funding for providing accommodations may be seen as a legitimate concern. With the success that some libraries have had soliciting contributions to offset some of the expenses incurred, it is hoped that more might pursue this option. Some have reported inexpensive modifications to existing equipment and furnishings and this too may offer a way to lessen the financial burden.

The responses have indicated that these libraries' strongest area of compliance is in the area of physical access to the building. Since the library has traditionally been a place to which people come, this is an understandable first step. Provision of materials in alternative and additional formats coupled with a willingness and

availability of staff for assistance seems to be another area in which the reporting libraries are strong, although this is still not a universal accommodation.

Concern may be appropriate though in considering the libraries attempts at planning for ADA compliance. The Americans with Disabilities Handbook clearly states that although public entities with less than fifty employees are not required to appoint an employee as ADA coordinator, all public entities were required to have performed an evaluation of each program and service for ADA compliance by January 26, 1993 (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and U.S. Department of Justice 1991). This requirement has been frequently reported in the professional library literature as well (Natale 1991, Natale 1992, Pack and Foos 1992). One must wonder then what has happened at the nearly forty percent who responded in the study that their libraries had not as yet performed a self-evaluation. Perhaps ignorance of this requirement is at fault. If this is in fact the case, one might wonder if having a staff member responsible for coordinating ADA compliance efforts, even though this is not mandated for these smaller institutions, might be to everyone's benefit.

Another area of concern may be the perception by some respondents that their service community is without persons with disabilities. While this might in fact be the case, it may also be the case that persons with disabilities are

simply not using the library. As is always the case, community surveys of non-users as well as users of the library are necessary in order to be proactive rather than reactive to the community's needs. It may be fair to be concerned with the library administrations' acceptance of the status quo rather than adequately planning for the future.

Although they were not predominant, some responses seem to show an anger toward the mandates of the law. The source of this apparent anger may be a concern. If the perception is that these libraries are being mandated to accommodate a nonexistent portion of the community, what is being done may be more to comply with the law than to serve the community. With the many advances being made in medicine and rehabilitative practice, it is likely that persons with disabilities will be even more prevalent in our society. Providing quality library services and materials for a diverse community can indeed be a daunting task but, one must hope that government regulations do not create an environment in which the desire to achieve this quality will suffer.

Future research may do well to inquire into these areas. As in all areas of library operation, planning is essential. It would be helpful to know if the libraries who have not done a self-evaluation are unaware of this requirement, ignoring it, or of the belief that it somehow

doesn't apply to their institutions. The data seem to suggest that the libraries who had named an ADA coordinator were also likely to have performed an ADA self-evaluation. Perhaps a working knowledge of the ADA can be enhanced by having an individual responsible for the institution's compliance.

Inquiry into library perception of the community served may also provide valuable information. While it is always difficult to identify and profile non-users of the library, it may be critical to the goal of equal access addressed by the ADA. The three respondents that suggested that there were no disabled individuals in their communities were from libraries who had not performed an ADA self-evaluation nor had they appointed a coordinator. Once again, it may be suggested that an individual made responsible for compliance may become more familiar with the law's requirements and in turn, the strong and weak points of the library's services and those who may use them.

A final suggestion is that of researching the attitudes of librarians toward government regulation of library operation. It would be very valuable to understand whether it is the regulations themselves that are perceived as the problem or the interference of non-librarians in the business of libraries. This researcher would like to think that accommodating the needs of patrons is foremost in the minds of librarians. If this is indeed the case, it may be

that the law is seen as overwhelming. This again may be a problem that can be alleviated by means of an ADA coordinator. Familiarity with the act may allow for the development of a better understanding of its spirit and may facilitate attempts at compliance.

This report is not intended to provide generalizable information, but merely to identify some suggestions and problems that libraries and librarians may have in trying to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. I thank those who have participated and hope we can all continue to help one another boldly go where everyone should have been able all along.

Instruction: Please answer the following questions as they apply to your main library facility by marking yes(Y), no(N) or not applicable(N/A) and return in the enclosed envelope. If you have comments concerning your branches, include them at the end of the survey. Returning this questionnaire implies that you have consented to participate in this study.

1. Has your library appointed a staff member as ADA coordinator?	Y	N	N/A
	-	-	-
2. Has your library completed a self-evaluation for ADA compliance?	-	-	-
3. Is a disability awareness and training program provided for library employees?	-	-	-
4. Are accessible parking spaces (16 feet wide with an 8 foot access aisle) available?	-	-	-
5. Is the walkway into the library at least 36 inches wide and in good repair?	-	-	-
6. Is the opening of the entrance door at least 32 inches wide?	-	-	-
7. Can doors be opened easily with one hand?	-	-	-
8. Are all aisles at least 36 inches wide?	-	-	-
9. Are catalogs, material displays and reference materials located no more than 54 inches high?	-	-	-
10. If service counters are higher than 36 inches, is additional space no higher than 34 inches provided?	-	-	-
11. If there is more than one public level, are they connected by ramps or elevators?	-	-	-
12. Do elevator controls have Braille and raised lettering mounted 35 to 54 inches above the floor?	-	-	-
13. Are directional signs well lit and do they include Braille and raised lettering?	-	-	-
14. Does your library have materials available in the following formats:			
taped texts?	-	-	-
large print?	-	-	-
Braille?	-	-	-

Appendix A (2 of 3)

	Y	N	N/A
15. Does your library have a reading machine available for persons with visual impairments?	-	-	-
16. Are staff available to read documents for persons with visual impairments?	-	-	-
17. Does your library have a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD)?	-	-	-
18. Does your library have available closed caption video tapes?	-	-	-
19. Is any member of the library staff able to speak and interpret American Sign Language?	-	-	-
20. Has your library board reviewed procedures and policies to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to library services and materials?	-	-	-
21. Some libraries have solicited consumer input concerning ADA compliance by means of creative signage such as "Accommodation Spoken Here" and the use of ADA suggestion boxes. Has your library used these or similar techniques? If yes, please explain.	-	-	-
22. Some libraries have modified table and carrel heights by affixing boards to the bottoms of the legs in order to raise them. Has your library tried this or any other creative architectural means? If yes, please explain.	-	-	-
23. Some libraries have solicited donations of adaptive equipment or funds to purchase such equipment from organizations such as the Lions Club. Has your library tried this or similar strategies? If yes, please explain.	-	-	-

Appendix A (3 of 3)

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act does not specify compliance by any of the methods possibly suggested by the preceding questions, it does mandate that public libraries as public entities must reasonably accommodate all persons with disabilities. Please use the following space to expand upon any of the above or to describe alternative methods your library is using to provide equal access to information to persons with disabilities.

Re: ADA Compliance: What Are We Doing?

April 15, 1994

Dear Director:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Enclosed, please find a questionnaire concerning equal access to information for persons with disabilities. This information is being gathered from public libraries in the State of Ohio to determine what steps they are taking to comply with the act.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as you do not need to sign your name to the questionnaire. Although the return envelopes are coded in order to determine who has responded, the questionnaires contain no identifiers and will be retained separately from the envelopes; only the investigator has access to the survey data. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose to not participate in this study or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. Although your participation is extremely valuable to this research, it is completely voluntary. A copy of the results of this study will be available upon request.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (216) 454-1774 or Dr. Richard Rubin, my research advisor, at (216) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return the completed questionnaire within two weeks in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope to me at the following address:

Albert Scheimann
1238 15th Street NW
Canton, Ohio 44703

Sincerely,

Albert Scheimann
Graduate Student

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